

**WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
OUT-OF-BASIN TRANSFER COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 11, 2003

Members Present:

Julia Forgue
Jeff Hershberger
Herb Johnston
Pam Marchand
Henry Meyer

Water Resources Board Staff:

Kathleen Crawley
Connie McGreavy

Guests:

Albert and Susan Huetteman

Members Absent:

Ken Burke
Paul Corina
Mike Covellone
Kevin Cute
John Dubis
Stan Knox
Denise Poyer
Alisa Richardson
Ed Szymanski

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. McGreavy called the meeting to order at 2:00PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the April and May meeting minutes was deferred until the next meeting. Ms. Marchand agreed to take notes during the first part of today's meeting with Ms. McGreavy following.

III. ITEMS FOR ACTION

None.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Performance Standards Guidance for Out-of Basin Transfer

Mr. Hershberger recapped the MA Interbasin Transfer Act for members present. He stated that all applications must be reviewed, even for a designation of "insignificance" (< 1 MGD OOBT). The application process can require two years. The state evaluates OOBT applications, first under MEPA (MA Environmental Policy Act) regulations. There are typically three types of OOBT applications: water, wastewater, or a combination. Applications for new or expanded public water systems or wastewater facilities automatically trigger stricter review since they are almost always found to be "significant" (> 1MGD OOBT).

Discussion centered on 8 primary criteria: MEPA review; whether all sources of water within a basin have been assessed before proposing an OOBT; conservation; forestry management; instream flow; groundwater; local water resources plan; and impact. Mr. Hershberger explained that many agencies are involved in the decision process, and that stream flow and impact assessment are the most difficult criteria to satisfy, especially because they are somewhat subjective. Mr. Johnston thought Rhode Island should adopt criteria appropriate to the state and incorporate those into a similar act or new regulations. He felt that, based on Ms. Richardson's earlier analysis of first order streams, that all conveyances of water could be interpreted as OOBT. His idea was to specify major accounting basins, especially those with stream gauges, in order to accurately measure the import and export of water.

B. GIS-Based Assessment of Out-of Basin Transfer – Blackstone Region, Statewide

The committee noted that the Wood-Pawcatuck water use study contained errors that needed further investigation. Mr. Meyer and Mr. Hershberger agreed to review the data with assistance from the US Geological Survey. Regarding the Blackstone, GIS-based assessment, Mr. Johnston agreed to review the water use report and draw some conclusions. Mr. Hershberger did not believe there was time to prepare either a map for the Blackstone, or the statewide picture of OOBT, given the intensity of the Wood-Pawcatuck mapping process. The committee agreed that the map was illustrative of what can be done for watersheds (or accounting basins) in the future.

C. Update on Low/Moderate Income Housing Act

Ms. Poyer was not present to give the committee an update on her research.

D. Update on Ninigret Hamlet Development Approval Process

Mr. and Mrs. Huetteman gave the committee a brief update on the project. Mr. Meyer, wearing his hat of Kingston Planning Board member, advised the Huettemans on municipal process and how the Ninigret application would track in terms of permits and approvals. Mr. Cote was not present to lend insight regarding the RI Coastal Resources Management Council “Assent” process. A question arose whether projects that proceed under this act can be exempt from all land use laws, outside of the parameters set in the act.

E. Research Findings: Interstate Agreements

Mr. Duhamel was not present to give his findings on the agreements between Connecticut and Rhode Island.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Draft Report Outline

The committee deferred discussion on this item until next month.

B. Next Meeting

The July meeting will be held on the second Wednesday of the month.

VI. AJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie McGreavy
RI Water Resources Board

Date